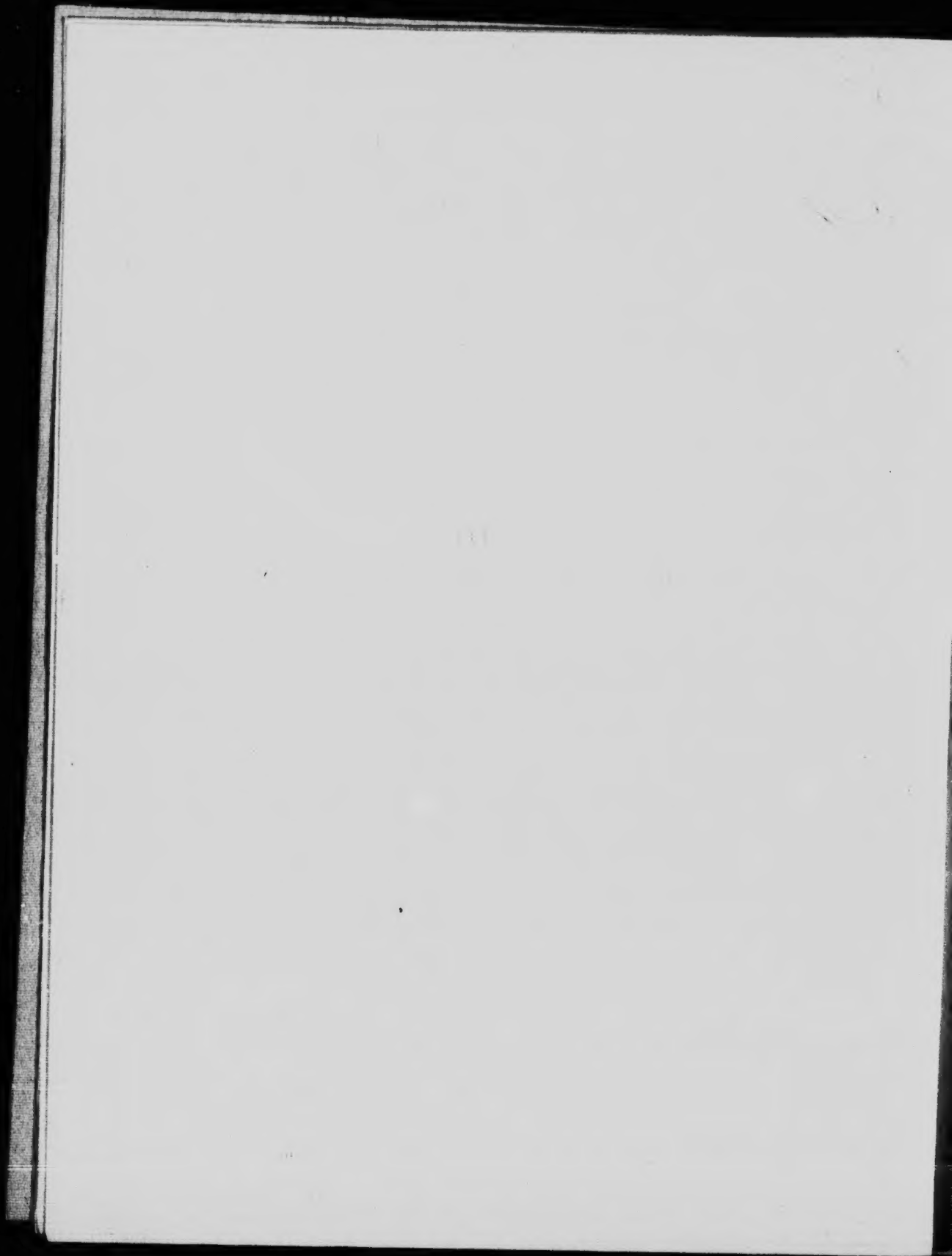


**The Golden Book of
King Edward VII.**



39
THE · GOLDEN · BOOK
OF
KING · EDWARD · VII ·

His & Kindly Words of His Majesty



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1910

For England's Sake



Under the shadow of a world in arms
He passes hence, whose only thought
was Peace :

Out of the hates, the hurries, the alarms
That with the strenuous century increase :
"Had he but spared himself," so runs the tale,
Full many a long year yet was his to take ;
But no : though heart should flag, though breath
should fail,
He gave his best, his last—for England's sake.



The regal purple and the ring of gold
As fraught with new significance, he wore :
The sceptre handed from his sires of old
Had meanings it had never known before :
To heal the sick, the sorrowful to cheer,
The poor and desolate his friends to make,
He held as sovereignty : and, void of fear,
Counted no cost too great—for England's sake.



Ring among Kings, man among simple men,
With all humanity for kith and kin,
What better guerdon can we wish him, then,
Than Peace—that peace where he has entered in?
No red-stained laurels rest upon his head,
But olive-boughs of peace around him wake
Sweet memories, and crown him,—living or dead—
With praise, and love, and tears,—for England's
sake.

May Byron



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IT will always be my most ardent and sincere wish to walk in the footsteps of good men who have preceded me, and with God's help to fulfil the duties which I have been called upon to occupy to-day.

(1875)

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These earnest words of his own might have been prophetically put into the mouth of the little boy who was born at Buckingham Palace on November 9th, 1841, to so great an inheritance, so enormous a responsibility. It was nearly 80 years since the birth of an English Monarch's son had taken place in England: the Nation that welcomed the Heir-Apparent with unfeigned and enthusiastic rejoicings continued to follow his infant years with looks of elevated interest. The light, active, blue-eyed, fair-haired little boy—"Bertie" to his family, "Princey" to his teachers—was liable to get into scrapes, like any other healthy child: but he thought (as a scrap of a childish letter shows),



I do not know how it is that I am ever naughty, for I am much happier when I am good.

And as soon as he was able to write, he copied out in his straggly childish hand his simple little morning and evening prayers.

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O merciful God, I thank Thee for giving me rest during the night past, and refreshing me with quiet sleep. O Lord, grant that I may pass a good and happy day, and be obedient to all those who are set to watch over me. Bless dear Papa and Mama and give them the comfort of seeing me grow up a good child. Bless and keep my brothers and sisters, and teach them and me to remember Thee our Creator, in the days of our youth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.



O Almighty God, I thank Thee for all the mercies which Thou hast given me this day. Take me this night under the shadow of Thy wing, and grant that I may rise again in health and safety, for Thou only

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canst protect me. Bless dear Papa, Mama, my brothers and sisters, and make me a good boy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Under the care of governesses and tutors, the little Albert Edward was educated as the heir of England,—and might indeed have been rather over-educated, had not his natural sense of fun preserved him. But he was “an affectionate, dear little fellow,” anxious to do kindnesses, and acutely sympathetic. At ten years of age he made his first speech to the Newcastle Corporation, in return for the present of a handsome paper-cutter;—but his words are not recorded,—and at eighteen, he was informed by the Queen that he was now to consider himself his own master. It was not, however, until two years later, that the death of his father, the Prince Consort, left the Prince of Wales, a youth of twenty, in as difficult a position, perhaps, as any young man has ever occupied : serving a long apprenticeship to royalty for forty years : being obliged to perform the most irksome and tedious tasks that can fall to a Sovereign’s share, without any actual authority : acting as a deputy King, it may be said, minus all the pride and the *tudor* of Kingship.

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His approaching marriage with the beautiful Danish Princess Alexandra stirred him deeply. It was a love-match of the most romantic nature,—from the time that, having fallen in love with her portrait, he met her in the old Cathedral of Spire, to the day when sixty maidens strewed flowers before her in the English streets,—when, “since womankind existed,” as Thackeray wrote, “has any woman had such a greeting?”



I feel now (wrote Albert Edward) what it is to be really happy. If I can make the future life and home of the Princess a happy one, I shall be content. I feel doubly happy in the thought that my approaching marriage is one that has the approval of the Nation: and I only trust that I may not disappoint the expectations that have been formed of me.

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"A quiet evening at home with the Princess and the children,"—that, in later years, was his own thoroughly English ideal of happiness. But he was already convinced of the fact that "happiness, to be perfected, must be shared": as witness a remarkable letter he wrote:



Yes; I have been a most fortunate man—heir to a great throne, and yet able to enjoy liberty. I have an admirable mother, an exquisite wife, and charming children, a whole nation—nay, many nations in one—to love and please. I sometimes wonder how I manage not to become selfish and hard-hearted. Yet I pity misery and want, and when I have seen an anxious and worried face, I cannot sleep before I have enquired into the poor creature's distress. I catch very vivid impressions when I travel, and I daily write to the Princess such descriptions of landscapes and people

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as I can well cram into a letter of reasonable length. She keeps these, and could one day make a book out of my travelling notes. I wish you could see the Princess. She possesses a soul as perfect as her face, which you must know is very sweet and beautiful.

And these sentiments of pity and the desire to relieve suffering, were fully shared by the gracious woman whom he had chosen. For the name of Alexandra—Princess or Queen—will remain synonymous for many a generation with the thought of spontaneous philanthropy—with the remembrance of “an infinite capacity for doing good.”

The ordinary troubles of life, which no pomp nor power can avert, fell upon the royal pair,—the all-but fatal illness of the Prince of Wales in 1871,—the loss of their youngest child the same year, and of their eldest on the eve of his marriage in 1892. The sense of relationship with the whole nation sustained them in their sorrow.

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If sympathy at such a moment (they wrote) is of any avail, the remembrance that the grief has been shared by all classes will be a lasting consolation to their sorrowing hearts, and if possible, will make them more than ever attached to their dear country.

And it was this same feeling to which King Edward appealed in his memorable speech to his first Council.



I trust to the nation to support me in the arduous duties which now devolve upon me by inheritance, and to which I am determined to devote my whole strength during the remainder of my life.

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He did not appeal in vain. He was "loved not only as an accomplished man of the world," not only as a supremely able ruler, but as a friend, a companion,—one who had "come to seem at last an inseparable, inalienable, part of all our daily doings." "King Edward," as has been written, "was Great Britain,"—"more English than most Englishmen,"—"the representative man of the race." "King Edward was Great Britain"; and, now that his labours are accomplished, "Great Britain mourns as for herself."

King Edward evinced the same interest in the Arts and professions as in the more humble callings of life. That large and patient body, the brain of the nation, the British middle-class, was not ignored by him in favour of either the "classes" or the "masses." Sir Frederick Leighton once observed of a Royal Academy banquet:

"Sir, of the graces by which your Royal Highness has won and firmly retains the affectionate attachment of Englishmen, none has operated more strongly than the width of your sympathies, for there is no honourable sphere in which

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Englishmen move, no part of life in which they tread, wherein your Royal Highness has not at some time, by graceful word or deed, evinced an enlightened interest."

And his comments on the Arts are just what might be expected—plain common-sense words, laying stress upon the value of work, the sense of human kinship, and the desire for ultimate happiness in all things.



To be a good painter, genius is by no means all that is required; industry and perseverance must also be exercised, just as much as in the case of eminent clergymen, lawyers, scientific men, philosophers, or the members of any other branch of human exertion which we can name. (*Royal Academy, 1871*)



I lay great store by the meeting of various classes of society in pursuit of a common yet elevating study. Such a union softens

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asperities, inspires kindly feeling between various classes, and proves that all mankind are akin when engaged in an art which gives the highest expression to some of the best and purest feelings of the human heart.

(Royal College of Music, 1893)

He held medical men in high honour :



Any addition to the knowledge of medicine must always be followed by an increase in the happiness of mankind.

(1881)

As for his literary tastes, which are evinced in the royal library at Sandringham, it is evident that his chief interest was in the history of his country, and especially of his own time. He bought every work he could hear of, dealing with the public or private administration of the Eastern Empire, with the history of the Crimean War, with Colonial history, and reports of the Indian Mutiny. The collection generally is "that of a man of business, whose interests are many and diverse."

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India and the Colonies were, indeed, very near to his heart. He was an unswerving believer, as some one has said, at a time when the Colonies were not "fashionable," in their actual and their possible greatness; he desired to forward them in all respects.



In every effort to further and develop their material interests—interests which we feel to be inseparably bound up with the prosperity of the Empire, we must remember that, as regards the Colonies, they are the legitimate and natural homes in future, of the most adventurous and energetic portion of the population of these islands. Their progress, and their power of providing all that makes life comfortable and attractive, cannot, therefore, but be a matter of serious concern to us all.

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And in India, which he said it had been the dream of his life to visit, he made friends of the haughtiest, the most aloof, amongst the native Princes. "It was then that he evinced his unrivalled tact by showing a perfect knowledge of their complicated ranks and genealogies, the antiquity of some of their families, and the gallant deeds of their ancestors."

The same unrivalled tact was brought to bear in dealing with that "most distressful country" where no English Royalty might reasonably expect to be received with open arms. For, as an Irish newspaper has observed, "since the days of Strongbow, King Edward was the first English monarch who could be said to be a friend of Ireland." And indeed that warm-hearted isle reciprocated the friendship. After his first visit there in 1858, all had "some word of endearment to couple with his name, some story to tell of his kindness and generosity." A leading Irishman is reported to have replied, on being questioned of possible risk to the King. "Risk! He could walk alone from one end of Ireland to the other, and never have anything worse than a rose thrown at him." And when, in 1885, a meeting of Irish

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dynamitards in New York threatened him with death if he set foot on Irish shores, his prompt response was to do so on an occasion of which he said :



Our late visit to Ireland, if it was a labour at all, was a labour of love. . . . I was sure that on going there we should meet with a kind and hearty reception. We received as kind and loyal a reception as it could be the good fortune of anyone to meet with. My son and I had the opportunity of visiting, although the time allowed us was too short to do all that we could have wished to do, those districts of the town of Dublin, in which the houses, although they might have picturesqueness, were certainly not calculated to promote the happiness and welfare of their inhabitants.

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He had, in fact, "walked virtually unattended into the darkest slums of Dublin, to have blessings and good wishes showered upon him instead of hot water and vitriol."

Later on he returned once more to "dear dirty Dublin," and was welcomed as warmly as ever.



It is with supreme satisfaction that I have during our stay so often heard the hope expressed that a brighter day is dawning upon Ireland. I shall eagerly await the fulfilment of this hope. Its realisation will, under divine providence, depend largely upon the steady development of self-reliance and co-operation, upon better and more practical education, upon the growth of industrial and commercial enterprise, and upon the increase of mutual toleration and respect.

(1903)

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But the courage of the King in the face of danger, as evinced in the 1885 visit to Dublin,—that 'simple courage' which has been alluded to by his son,—was one of his most typical traits. His life was a charmed one: it was full of hair-breadth 'scapes and painful accidents and illnesses,—yet nothing shook his imperturbability. His coolness and pluck were peculiarly gratifying to his subjects: not less so was his appreciation of those qualities in others. Deeds of homely heroism he loved to reward: and his full knowledge of the Nation's devotion to him made him realise the more keenly for how much he stood to them.

"Will my people ever forgive me?" was his first remark when told of that necessary impending operation which postponed the Coronation festivities. Not a word of his own pain, risk, or disappointment: and subsequently he sent a message to his subjects:



The postponement of the ceremony owing to my illness caused, I fear, much inconvenience and trouble to those who intended

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to celebrate it; but their disappointment was borne by them with admirable patience and temper. The prayers of my people for my recovery were heard; and I now offer up my deepest gratitude to divine providence for having preserved my life and given me strength to fulfil the important duties which devolve upon me as the Sovereign of this great Empire. (1902)

When the deferred great ceremony at last took place, it was said that His Majesty, as he left the Abbey, "looked like a man who had seen a vision." Was it the

"Vision of the world and all the wonder that
would be,

When the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the
battle flags were furl'd,
In the Parliament of man, the Federation
of the World."

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The King's own leanings towards a soldier's life—"the only life"—as he said in his younger days,—and the firm confidence in "our first line of defence" which led him to place both his sons as Cadets in the Navy, were often manifested in his utterances.



I think Englishmen have every reason to be proud of possessing such an Army and Navy as ours. Of course, we do not pretend that they are perfection, but I am sure that every endeavour is used year after year to make our land and sea forces as efficient as possible for our defence and for the maintenance of peace, both in this country and in our vast possessions abroad.

(1875)

And his stirring words in 1877 are as true now as when they were first spoken :

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At the present moment, when the political horizon far away is so obscure, I feel sure that whatever may happen, it is the wish of all Englishmen that our Army, however small, should be in the highest state of efficiency, and that our Navy should be as it ought to be—the best in the world.

Yet his desire for this efficiency was based upon a deeper longing,—the goal of all his life. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." And King Edward worked continually, untiringly, indomitably, towards peace. In social affairs, in private matters, his intervention was being constantly sought, to prevent folks making shipwreck of their lives; and of his efforts in the cause of international conciliation, it is not possible to speak too highly.

It has been written: "King Edward went openly in the light of day, facing Kings and men and talking like a King and man, and the world also knows what he did for peace."

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Edward the Seventh sleeps with his mighty ancestor crowned with the rarest of all benedictions, that blessing that is upon the peacemakers : for "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war," and these greater triumphs were his in superb abundance. Charity and kindness between nations,—peace upon earth, goodwill to man,—for these he strove from the very outset. "The Uncle of Europe,"—"the commercial traveller of peace," as he was termed with affectionate humour,—never lost an opportunity of impressing his hopes upon his hearers. To the King of Italy he said:



We both love liberty and free institutions and, having three great objects before us, we have marched together in the paths of civilisation and progress, employing ourselves at the same time in the maintenance of universal peace. It is not long since we fought side by side, and, although I am confident that another occasion will not

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present itself, I am certain that we shall always be united for the cause of liberty and civilisation as well as for the universal well-being and the prosperity of all nations.

(1903)

To the King of Portugal he expressed the same desire,



That our countries may side by side tread the peaceful path of progress and civilisation, and that by unity of purpose in our commercial policy we may jointly contribute to the further expansion of trade and industry in our respective countries and colonies, the integrity and preservation of which is one of my dearest aims and objects.

(1903)

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And again :



My country as well as your own, I feel sure, has but one wish, and that is to uphold the honour of our flag and to maintain the colonies we possess without encroaching on the possessions of others.

He was determined to drag out his kingdom from her position of "splendid isolation," that she might bear her part in maintaining the European balance of power, which is the European peace : and with splendid tact and patience he achieved his end. King Edward was never parochial in his patriotism : he sought the ultimate good of all, as of fellow-members of one great family,—and so he pointed out in his fine phrase to the English Freemasons :



I do not wish to allude to foreign Lodges with whom we are not in accord, but I would ask that at any rate we should strive

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to pick out what is good in them, and remember that we are not only English Freemasons, but Freemasons of the entire universe. (1888)

And his extreme and sedulous interest in promoting international exhibitions, was built upon the same basis : he loved to dwell upon



The value of these international exhibition in promoting the growth of those Christian and kind feelings towards each other, which we ought to pray should animate the whole of the nations of the world. (1865)

Although taking a pardonable pride in British pre-eminence,—



In admiring and I trust appreciating the successful result that has distinguished foreign exertions, I have also learnt to look

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with increased admiration on those wonderful works of human ingenuity, perseverance, and industry, the products of the heads and hands of my own countrymen.

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Peace, well-being, happiness,—these were the gist of his diplomatic speeches :



May our two flags float beside one another to the most distant time, as they float to-day, for the maintenance of peace, and for the well-being not only of our own countries but of all nations,

(1904

were his words to the Kaiser. Of America he said :



My earnest wish and hope is that England and America should go hand in hand in peace and prosperity.

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But perhaps his greatest triumph was the breaking down of the age-long barrier between France and England—the establishment of the *entente cordiale*, and the recognition of the mutual interests which should unite the neighbour countries,—



Interests which, I am glad to think, increase every year, and which tend to draw closer the ties of friendship and mutual respect which have characterised the relations which have so happily existed between this country and my own for nearly a century. The days of conflict between the two countries, are, I think, happily over, and I hope that future historians, in alluding to Anglo-French relations in the present century, may be able to record only a

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friendly rivalry in the fields of commerce and industrial development; and that in the future, as in the past, England and France may be regarded as the champions and pioneers of peaceful progress and civilization, and as the homes of all that is best and noblest in literature, art and science.



A Divine Providence has designed that France should be our near neighbor, and I hope, always our dear friend. There are no two countries in the world whose mutual prosperity is more dependent on each other. There may have been misunderstandings and causes of dissension in the past, but all such differences are, we believe, happily removed and forgotten.

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and I trust that the friendship and admiration which we all feel for the French nation and their glorious traditions may in the near future develop into a sentiment of the warmest affection and attachment between the peoples of the two countries. The achievement of this aim is my constant desire.

(1903)

One great secret of King Edward's immense influence was that, as *The Times* has said, "He was indeed a man among men ; and the British people, and yet more perhaps the Irish people, instinctively love a man. Nothing struck them more and nothing pleased them better than his open and manifest joy in life." And the British love of sport and open-air amusements was in him exemplified to the uttermost. Whether his racing yacht *Britannia* was carrying off cup after cup—whether he were shooting tigers in India, pheasants at Sandringham, or deer in the Highlands—or whether, pressed

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and thronged by enthusiastic multitudes, he led in his Derby winners,—the King was emphatically possessed of the finest spirit of sportsmanship. But he wrote,



I am the happiest man when I can, like plain Mr. Jones, go to a race meeting without it being chronicled in the papers the next day that the Prince of Wales has been taken to gambling very seriously, and yesterday lost more money than he could afford to pay !



I have a horror of gambling, and should always do my utmost to discourage others who have an inclination for it, as I consider

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that gambling, like intemperance, is one of the greatest curses which the country could be afflicted with.



Horse racing may produce gambling or it may not, but I have always looked upon it as a manly sport which is popular with Englishmen of all classes, and there is no reason why it should be looked upon as a gambling transaction. Alas! those who gamble will gamble at anything.

He was a good rider to hounds, and had a friendly greeting for every man in the hunting field; he was a welcome guest in many a farmhouse after the hard day's run, being regaled on bread-and-cheese and home-brewed. In a word, he fulfilled his own definition of himself to the Savage Club:

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I understand your qualification for membership consists in your being working in literature and art, and good fellows. Of these qualifications the first I can hardly aspire to, but perhaps you will allow me to be the second.

In everything "he struck the human note," and nowhere more so than at Sandringham, his beautiful Norfolk estate where, as an Old-English country gentleman, he led what was for a King the "simple life," and where he was known "a model landlord, a successful farmer, a sanitary reformer, a generous philanthropist, an esteemed employer, and the most practical of all temperance reformers." Of all his private predilections, stock-breeding was his favourite: and he "loved his sheep and oxen," it has been said, "as William the Conqueror loved the tall red deer,—as if he had been their father." He brought the barren and almost hopelessly fallows of Sandringham to a state of magnificent fertility. King Edward, in fact, was one of the first to go "back to the land."

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I sincerely say that I take a great interest in all that is connected with agriculture. The very backbone of the Country, the best recruits of the Army and Navy, come from the agricultural districts. . . . I may say that what will do more than anything else towards making a country prosperous is the extension of its agriculture. . . . It is impossible for any British gentleman to live at his country place without taking an interest in agriculture. (1871-75)

And here again, "the human note" is audible :



We see especially how much the comfort, the well-being, prosperity, and happiness of

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farmers and agriculturists depend upon their kind wife who cheers them by the fireside at the end of their day's work, and lighten by female influence the load of difficulties.

But the keynote of King Edward's character and reign is summed up, as has been truly said, in the word Humanity—humanity in its widest as well as its narrowest sense. His life was not only a constant devotion to the broader issues of the State—for the love of England, with him, was a veritable passion,—but the endeavour to bring light into dark places—comfort to the sick and sorrowful—help to the needy and the poor. Whether,—as in 1884—he mixed freely among thousands of the British working classes at the Bethnal Green Museum, talking to them, they said, just as if he were a working man himself,—or whether, as on the occasion of his Coronation, he gave a dinner to over half a million London poor : to every variety and calling he extended that amazing sympathy which found its vent in the most carefully detailed practical kindness.

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In one of his earlier addresses, when Prince, he said, that "being excluded by his position from taking active part in political life, he would devote his time to duties connected with works of charity and public utility." And this intention was amply carried out. He became in the widest sense the Father of his people, who "always," as Will Crooks avowed, "makes the poor man feel as comfortable as possible"—mentally as well as physically. He laid special stress on this himself.



You are well aware of the deep interest and solicitude we take with regard to all classes of the community in this great metropolis, but we claim that we take a special interest in what concerns the well-being and the welfare of the working classes and of the poor of London.

(1887)

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But this deep and vital interest in the working class necessitated constant effort on their behalf. Sometimes was pleading for little outcast children.



What can be more dreadful than to see from day to day these wretched, miserable little children, who swarm in our streets, who know as little as we do how or where they can live, or who are their parents and natural protectors?



It must be felt to be the duty of every good Christian to endeavour to ameliorate the condition of that class of our fellow creatures.

(1871)

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Sometimes he was espousing the cause of simple heroism in humble life, for which he always had a particular delight.



Our hearts ought always to go with those brave and gallant men who seek to rescue the lives of their fellow countrymen in all weathers and in all times, by day or night.

(Royal National Lifeboat Institution, 1884)

Another day he would be speaking, with a curious thrill of fellow-feeling, of the London cabby :



One cannot think without pity of these poor men sitting on their cabs in the cold east wind with which we are well acquainted.

(1879)

And, again, he would pay a hearty tribute to the men of the green railway flag.



No public servants, I think, more deserve our sincere sympathy than the guards of our railway trains; it is obvious to all of us who have to travel constantly on railways how much our safety depends on their industry, their vigilance, their sobriety, and their discipline, and it is very gratifying to know that we may confidently rely on finding these qualities in them. Knowing what they have to go through, their exposure to all weathers and to risks of all kinds; remembering how much they have to be away from their homes and from their families, it seems to me that we have hardly the right to expect to obtain from them their valuable services unless we in some measure mitigate their sufferings from sickness and from accident.

(1882)

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Even those in what we usually hold the lowest stratum of employment—the last resource of the destitute—the “sandwichmen” of the metropolis,—had a place in his kindly heart: and, not content with regularly sending a handsome donation to their yearly dinner, he always took care to be personally represented there, and to read, with genuine interest, a subsequent account of the proceedings.

Nor did he stint his praise of those—whether corporate or individual—who worked for the people's good. Even the much abused L.C.C. came in for his warm encomium.



I feel convinced that there is no institution which works harder or is more desirous of doing good for the amelioration of all classes in this vast and increasing metropolis.

(1900)

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First and foremost in King Edward's desire for the betterment of his poorer subjects, stood the ancient question of Hospitals—always over-full, always under financial difficulties. The establishment of the "Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund for London" was the noblest and surest memorial of his mother's Diamond Jubilee. Inaugurated in 1897 this fund in three years had reached a total of about £367,000. "Its fundamental idea was to raise the standard of Hospital work," and to improve the general efficiency of certain institutions through systematic inspection by visiting committees of recognised business ability. And the vast improvement which has been wrought by these means is entirely due to the originator of the Fund. For, perhaps, of all King Edward's wise and witty sayings, none is more forcible than that regarding "preventible diseases." *"If preventible, why not prevented?"* There is the King's philosophy in a nutshell.

He applied the same formula—in action—to the apparently insoluble problem—the world-old problem—of the Housing of the Poor. He was one of the hardest-working

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members of the Royal Commission on the subject, visiting the blackest and the most unhealthy slums incognito. "Lord Nelson's captains," said he of one district, "had a sorry fate when their names were borrowed to distinguish the streets and lanes of this foul area." And he expressed himself with unusual vigour upon one of the very few occasions when he spoke in the House of Lords.



I take the keenest and liveliest interest in this great question. The subject of the Housing of the Poor is not entirely unknown to me, as, having acquired a property in Norfolk now for thirty years, I have had something to do in building efficient dwellings for the poor and the working classes. On arriving there I found the dwellings in the most deplorable

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condition, but I hope now that there is hardly one on the estate who can complain of not being adequately housed. . . . A few days ago I visited two of the poorest Courts in the district of St. Pancras and Holborn, where I can assure you, my Lords, that the condition of the people, or rather of their dwellings, was perfectly disgraceful. . . I cherish an earnest hope . . . of measures of a drastic and thorough kind which may be the means of not only improving the dwellings of the poor, but of ameliorating their condition generally.

(1884)

Nor were his efforts confined to London only: he had acquainted himself with the hideous unsanitariness of too many cottages in the loveliest villages of England, and had personally done his best to remedy the existing state of things.

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I may also refer to the great improvement made in the erection of farm buildings and the cottages. Beyond doubt there has been progress in the direction of improvement there, but still, I believe much yet remains to be done. Everything depends upon the well-being of the people, and if they are properly lodged, it tends to cleanliness and very possibly to moral advantage. Perhaps I may also be allowed to speak of a slight personal experience in that matter. I have a small estate in Norfolk, and observed myself the greatest importance of providing suitable cottages for those resident there, and having done so now reap immense advantage.

(1871)

"Everything depends upon the well-being of the

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people." It is to be wondered if any other King in the whole world's history has taken that point of view!

But there were, indeed, no limits to the King's desire for the "well-being of the people." It extended in all manner of directions: whether in sound common-sense advice regarding "all work and no play,"—



I am glad that you combine with Christian education, healthy recreation, which must tend to be of the greatest benefit to the community at large, and especially to young men who are exposed to so many temptations in a great city like this. It is a great advantage to all young men to have an opportunity of enjoying healthy and useful recreation.

(Y.M.C.A. 1888)

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Or in the tender solicitude which he always displayed towards the old and superannuated: seeking out those who had been neglected, or passed over, and putting them in such positions of safety and comfort.



. . . . That they may again live in the past, and make their final exit in a spirit of thankfulness to God and their fellow creatures.

(1865)

This habit of kind thought reached even to those "beyond these voices," and in 1883 he moved a resolution "that the present condition of the British cemeteries in the Crimea is not creditable to us, and not creditable to a great country like ours, for I am sure we are the very first to do honour to the dead who fought in the name of their country."

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His famous farewell words to the Duke and Duchess of York, as they sailed on the "Ophir" to visit the various Colonies, may, indeed, be said to have been addressed to the Nation at large. "Make your minds easy—we will look after the children." The Nation recognised the fact: its mind *was* made easy: knowing that everything which could be done for its children—the poor, the sick, the helpless—the King would do: and remembering the words of his first speech as Monarch,—



I am fully determined to be a Constitutional Sovereign in the strictest sense of the word, and, as long as there is breath in my body, to work for the good and amelioration of my people.

(1901)

In the salient matter of education he took, as might be expected, a very deep interest: and he did not treat it on

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conventional lines. That a man should be educated to and for his vocation, was the theory of the man who had been most carefully trained to Kingship : moreover, he regarded knowledge as the root and promise of peace.



In the better education of the people lies one great hope of the future, . . . for the wide diffusion of cultivated intelligence is the surest guarantee of social peace, and the most fruitful source of self-reliance. (1904)

He was especially insistent on the value of technical training, remarking:—



Hitherto English teaching has chiefly relied on training the intellectual faculties so as to adapt men to apply their intelligence in any occupation of life to which they may be

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called, and this general discipline of the mind has, on the whole, been found sufficient until recent times; but during the last thirty years the competition of other nations, even in manufactures which once were exclusively carried on in this kingdom, has been very severe. Train the intelligence of industrial communities, so that, with the increasing competition of the world, England may retain her proud pre-eminence as a manufacturing nation.

(1881)

And on another occasion,



It is of the greatest importance to do everything within our power to advance the knowledge as well as the practical skill of the productive classes of the Empire.

(1887)

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But, above all, he inculcated the paramount importance of religious instruction and the study of the Scriptures: for he was "a regular church-goer, and a firm believer in the value of a sound moral training." The Church Army and the Salvation Army met with equal encouragement from him, and addressing the representatives of the Convocation of Canterbury on March 1st last, he said:



The strength of the Church is a bulwark to all that we hold dear in family life. The standard of morals which it enjoins exerts an elevating and vivifying influence on all classes, and the teaching it imparts to the young is of inestimable value in the formation of character.

Many years before he had assured the Bible Society:

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It is my hope and trust that, under the Divine guidance, the wider diffusion and deeper study of the Scriptures will in this as in every age, be at once the surest guarantee of the progress and liberty of mind, and the means of multiplying in the present form the consolations of our holy religion.

For the lofty words spoken by King Edward of his father, Albert the Good, might well serve as the motto and meaning of his own great life.



His dearest aim was to inspire his people with the love of all that is good and noble, and by closer knowledge and juster appreciation of each other to cultivate a spirit of goodwill and concord among the inhabitants of all regions.

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And this aim was the secret of his extraordinary tact and sympathy. "There was an instant appeal," again to quote Mr. Will Crooks, "about the personality of the King. This it was and not his power that drew me to him—drew everyone to him. Supposing a poor man had to see him, and felt ill at ease. It was quite natural. The poor fellow would go into the audience trembling. Perhaps he might be a man whose business was birds. King Edward would have been told about it, and before our friend knew where he was, he would find himself quite at home explaining the reason why some bird was that kind of bird, just like one chap to another."

His marvellous memory, "a treasure to a Prince," as he remarked, never allowed him to forget a face. Innumerable anecdotes bear witness to his *bonhomie* and generosity: and it was small wonder that, as he assured a nervous foreign Prince, who enquired as to precautions for his safety at the time of the great Coronation—



Precautions! We need no precautions.
The English people have nothing but

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friendship for me, and I do not believe that any malignant purpose is entertained by the enemies of Royalty who may be sojourning among us. No, sir; the British people and myself have confidence in one another.

In fact, it has been truly observed that "if the world at any time since 1902 could have been polled to ascertain the most popular of its inhabitants, there can be no question that the vote would have fallen to the late King." . . . In the words of Canon Scott Holland, "He fitted his post like a glove."



Remember, above all, that saying which one of our greatest admirals handed down to posterity, "England expects every man to do his duty."
(1878)

So he told the Cadets on the training-ship *Britannia* when he brought his sons to share their fortunes. One man, above all, has remembered that saying and has done his

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duty—"as long as there was breath in his body." It is said that when King Edward ascended the throne, he assured one of his intimate friends that "he would play the game." It is the same idea in more homely phrase—the doing of one's duty. Working twelve hours a day for the public good,—punctual, orderly, early-rising, abstemious,—disregarding physical discomfort and increasing infirmities,—the King almost in the very act of death persevered in the duties of Kingship. That which he had spoken of, in another man, as "admirable skill, indomitable patience and unceasing and unwearied energy," (1886) were his to the very end. Give in? Stop work? Not he! "No," said he, smiling, "my back is to the wall: I shall fight it out." He fully recognised that this was in all human probability the end: but with the same unflinching courage he repeated his "declaration of independence,"—his defiance of death, while yet life left him power to labour :—



No : I shall not give in : I shall go on : I shall work to the end.

They were the last words that he was able to utter.

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He died, as has been said by a medical journal, a martyr to his sense of duty : almost literally on his feet ; refusing to regard himself as an invalid. "I was much touched," said the last man received by him in audience, "much touched by the devotion to public duty which the King showed in seeing me at all under the circumstances, and at the kind interest he took in our affairs."

Yes, "as long as there was breath in his body"—the promise was kept to the uttermost—King Edward worked for the good and amelioration of his people. That which England expected from him, he had of a truth accomplished in him was fulfilled an example of devotion to duty paralleled only by our very greatest. And the last words of Sir Richard Grenville, the fighting sea-captain, might have been those of Edward, King and Peacemaker :—

*Here die I, with a joyful and quiet mind,
for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought,
my soul willingly departing from this body, leaving behind
the lasting fame of having behaved as every valiant soldier
is in his duty bound to do.*

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Peace be with the Peacemaker : all love and gentle memories go with him. Though in some other part of God's great unseen universe he has joined the innumerable multitudes of "the majority," we can still retain the impulses and influences which that kindly presence has bequeathed to us; we still can cry to Him who is not the Lord of the dead, but of the living,

God Save the King





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